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Mr. Speaker, as we all reel from the devastation of Katrina, what is surprising is that so many claim to have been surprised by an event both predictable and inevitable.

This is the moment when the Nation's attention is trained upon not just this tragedy but what we must do to prevent future unnecessary suffering and loss. Today with a majority of Americans at risk from natural disasters, this is more important than ever for us to get the job done right.

Four years ago, we got it wrong as FEMA lost its focus in the vast Homeland Security bureaucracy. We need to listen to each other this time and to the consensus of independent experts. We need to deal with the long term and to find an appropriate Federal role. We need to use the forces of nature to protect against the power of nature. We must assure that each step along the way that we take as a Congress leaves our communities more liveable and our families safer, healthier, and more economically secure.